

REMARKS

The Office Action

In the Office Action mailed July 28, 2008, claims 1-4 were rejected over particular cited prior art, and claims 5-17 were objected to as being multiple dependent claims which ultimately depend from other multiple dependent claims.

Remarks

Applicant respectfully submits that the present Office Action is improper insofar as it addresses a set of claims which are not at issue.

In preparing to respond to the present Office Action, Applicant noted that it addresses claims which were at issue in the parent PCT application. Applicant submitted a preliminary amendment on December 16, 2005 which made revisions to the specification and claims. The cover sheet of this preliminary amendment appears in the file history of the present application as is in the PAIR system, and bears the Patent Office's stamp indicating it was received December 16, 2005. (A copy of the cover sheet is attached hereto.) However, the claims appearing in the file history are the ones that were originally filed, and not the amended ones. Applicant includes herewith a copy of the previously filed preliminary amendment.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Patent Office make of record the correct set of claims as set forth in the preliminary amendment and issue a new Office Action with regard to those claims.

Applicant regrets any inconvenience this may have caused to the Examiner and is willing to extend any necessary cooperation needed to correct this problem. Any questions, comments or suggestions the Examiner may have should be directed to the undersigned attorney.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 07-1180.

Dated:

Respectfully submitted,

By

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Enclosures

10/561331

16 DEC 2003
APR REC'D PCT/PTO

Preliminary Amendment

Attorney Docket No. CAF-34902/03

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Marshall G. Bailey

Serial No.:

Filed:

For: SCREENING APPARATUS

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Mail Stop PCT
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

Prior to examination of the above-referenced patent application, please amend the above-referenced application in the following manner:

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Marshall G. Bailey

Serial No.:

Filed:

For: SCREENING APPARATUS

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Mail Stop PCT
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

Prior to examination of the above-referenced patent application, please amend the above-referenced application in the following manner:

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

On page 1, after the title, please add the following heading:

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

On page 1, after line 5, please add the following heading:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

On page 1, after line 15, please add the following heading:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

On page 6, after line 10, please add the following heading:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

On page 7, after line 30, please add the following heading:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Please add the abstract on the following page:

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a vibratory screening apparatus (1) for use in removing solids from a liquid feed, and a basket (4) therefore. The apparatus comprises a static outer housing (2), and a floating basket vibratable by a vibrator device (10). The basket mounts a stack (7) of screen assemblies (8) provided with respective flow directing trays (9) for receiving filtrates from the screen assemblies. A flow distributor (15) divides the feed into at least first and a second feed streams and directs them onto respective screen assemblies, and receives from the flow directing trays, filtrates from respective screen assemblies.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A basket-(4) suitable for use in a vibratory screening apparatus -(1), for use in removing solids from a liquid and solids mixture feed, said basket-(4) mounting a stack of at least three screen assemblies-(8'', 8¹¹, 8²²), with superposed screen assemblies separated from each other by a respective flow directing tray-(9, 31, 37), and being provided with including a flow distributor-(15, 24) formed and arranged for receiving filtrate from a primary upper screen assembly-(8'') and dividing said filtrate into at least a first feed stream and a second feed stream and directing said feed streams onto respective remaining first and second ones of first and second said stack of screen assemblies-(8'', 8¹¹), and receiving filtrate from a respective remaining screen assembly-(8', 8¹¹), from said respective flow directing tray(s).
2. (Currently Amended) A basket-(4) according to claim 1, mounted in a said vibratory screening apparatus-(1) for use in removing solids from a liquid and solids mixture feed, said apparatus further comprising a static outer housing-(2), said housing comprising: a base support-(60) formed and arranged for mounting at least one said basket in floating manner so as to be vibratable, in use of the apparatus, by a vibrator device-(10) formed and arranged for vibrating said basket-(4), said base support-(60) having a sump-(56, 61) for receiving filtrate from said basket-(4), and said housing-(2) having a feed device-(64) formed and arranged for directing said liquid and solids mixture feed to said basket-(4) mounted in said base support-(60).
3. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said flow distributor-(15) is formed and arranged so as to be switchable between a plurality of different flow directing configurations.
4. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 3 wherein said plurality of flow directing configurations includes an intensive screening configuration in which the whole of the feed is directed onto said first remaining screen assembly-(8'', 36) and the whole of the filtrate from said first screen assembly-(8'', 36) is directed onto said second remaining screen assembly-(8¹¹, 46).

5. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 3 or-claim 4 wherein said plurality of flow directing configurations includes a restricted feed capacity configuration in which the whole of the feed is directed onto only one of said first and second remaining screen assemblies-(~~8'', 36, 8'''~~, 46), and the filtrate therefrom exhausted directly from the apparatus-(+) without passing through the other one of said first and second screen assemblies-(~~8'', 36, 8'''~~, 46).

6. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in any-one-of claims 1 to 5 claim 1 wherein said basket has further comprises a stack of three screen assemblies (~~8', 8'', 8'''~~, 31, 36, 46).

7. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 1 any-one-of claims 1 to 6 wherin at least said primary screen assembly (~~8', 31~~) has a different mesh size from at least one either of said remaining screen assembly assemblies (~~8', 8'', 36, 46~~).

8. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 1 any-one-of claims 1 to 7 wherein said first and second remaining screen assemblies (~~8', 8'', 36, 46~~) have the same mesh size.

9. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 1 any-one-of claims 1 to 8 wherein said flow distributor-(15, 24) defines a plurality of flow pathways provided with flow control devices-(20), for selective opening of[,] at least partially closing of different passages-(17, 18).

10. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 9 wherein at least one said flow control device-(20) is selected from the group consisting essentially of: flap valves-(~~20', 20'', 20'''~~), sleeve valves, plug valves, and closure plates.

11. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 9 or-claim 10 wherein at least one said flow control device-(20) is comprised comprises by a weir-(39), formed and arrange for sub-dividing [a] said feed into [a] said first feed stream passing over said weir and a said second feed stream not passing over said weir.

12. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 11 wherein said weir-(39) comprises a variable height weir.

13. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 9 any-one-of claims 9 to 12 wherein said flow distributor-(15, 24) includes at least one wall-(68) formed and arranged for defining a plurality of laterally adjacent flow pathways.

14. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 1 any one of claims 1 to 13 wherein the flow distributor (45) is mounted on the basket (4).

15. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 1 any one of claims 1 to 13 wherein the flow distributor (24) is coupled to the basket by flexible conduits (26).

16. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 2 or any one of claims 3 to 15 when dependent on claim 2, wherein said basket (4) forms part of a multi-basket assembly comprising a plurality of said baskets, mounted in said static housing (2), and wherein said housing (2) has a feed distribution device (15) formed and arranged for directing said liquid and solids mixture feed to any one or more at least one of said plurality of baskets.

17. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 2 or any one of claims 3 to 15 when dependent on claim 2, wherein said basket (4) further includes a lateral divider (68) defining independent feed processing modules (28, 29, 69, 70), and wherein said housing has a feed distribution device (71-74) formed and arranged for directing said liquid and solids mixture feed to any one or more at least one of said basket feed processing modules (28, 29, 69, 70).

18. (Currently Amended) A basket as claimed in claim 1 any one of claims 1 to 17 wherein said flow directing trays (9,31,37) are formed and arranged so that substantially the whole of the filtrate from a screen assembly (9) directly above said flow directing tray (9,31,37) can be intercepted thereby, whereby said feed can be substantially fully divided into parallel first and second feed streams to respective ones of first and second remaining screen assemblies (8^a,8^b).

REMARKS

If the Examiner has any questions relating to the application, Applicant's attorney may be reached at (248) 647-6000.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: December 16, 2005